The Message of Khadi

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(FOUNDED BY MAHATMA GANDHI)

Editor : K. G. MASHRUWALA

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"LORD OF HUMILITY"

(By M. K. Gandhi)

Lord of humility, dwelling in the little pariah hut,
help us to search for Thee throughout that fair land
watered by Ganges, Brahmaputra and Jamuna.
Give us receptiveness, give us open-heartedness,
give us Thy humility, give us the ability and willingness
to identify ourselves with the masses of India.
O God, who does help only when man feels utterly humble,
grant that we may not be isolated from the people
we would serve as servants and friends.
Let us be embodiments of self-sacrifice, embodiments of godliness,
humility personified, that we may know the land better
and love it more.

Wardha, 12-9-'34

TO THE MIDDLE CLASSES

[Shri Dhirendra Mazumdar, President of the All-India Spinners' Association, has addressed a very valuable letter to *khadi* workers on the occasion of the Charkha Jayanti. Though the letter is primarily intended for *khadi* workers, incidentally it is worthy of consideration by the middle classes also. As it is too long, I had to omit certain portions. A copy of the letter in full (in Hindustani) can be obtained by sending postage stamps worth 1 a. 6 ps. to the Secretary, A. I. S. A., Sevagram, Wardha, to meet postage and cost. — K. G. M.]

The Charkha Sangh is the first and biggest of all the organizations that Gandhiji set up for the fulfilment of his objectives and, therefore, after his death, as the eldest member of the family, a great responsibility devolves on you, *khadi* workers. More than what you would appeal to the people to do, you have to go deep into your own obligations and fulfil them ; otherwise your words will not carry any weight and it will be a dangerously hollow show.

The greatest problem before the country is that of production and its producers. With the development of capitalism during a period of several centuries, the all-round exploitation of the masses has gone on increasing and today its poison has spread so widely and universally that the world is crying for succour. The slogans which go all round are 'abolish capitalism' and 'establish *kisan-mazdoor raj*'. The inevitable result of this agitation is that it is leading all parties to one goal, viz. abolition of all classes and the creation of a single working-class society. The slogans are common to Communists, Socialists as well as the Congress. But inspite of all propaganda, we do not see that the world moves even an inch in that direction. Why is it so ? If the Charkha Sangh is to solve the present problems of the country and thus justify its existence, it has not only to answer this question, but also successfully solve the problems of the country, or else perish in the attempt. The *mantra* 'Do or Die' is the legacy which Bapu has left to all his constructive organizations. Ordinary people will take 'Do' to mean, 'eat, drink and do other acts of creature life, and earn something for achieving that purpose.' But for Bapu 'Do' meant, as we all know, 'solve the problems of the day or perish in the attempt.'

The main reason why any progress is not made in the direction of a classless society is that though every one desires that society should advance, no one wants his individual life and comforts to be reduced in the least. It is like soldiers wanting to remain in their barracks and wishing the adavnce of the army. The Governor-General's pomp and show must be maintained as of old, and the ministers must maintain a standard befitting their high position. The capitalists should enjoy a life of luxury and ease to run the country's industries efficiently and ably. The large number of middle class people created by capitalism for its maintenance and development feel that they would not be able to make an impression upon society if they do not have a spotlessly white dress and imitate the polished style and manners of their employers and superiors and maintain a decent establishment. Therefore, every one wants these to remain as they are. Is it not then a matter for surprise that, nevertheless, all intelligent people want that the whole society should be converted into a classless society of workers ?

The middle class people make the loudest agitation because they are the hardest hit. They are like a crow donned with peacock feathers. They desire a place in high class society, but have no sufficient resources. As a matter of fact, the middle class is a part of the mass of the people employed by the capitalists as their agents and assistants for exploiting the rest. In

return this middle class gets a small commission and a share in their comforts and luxuries. The lure of comforts and luxuries attracts *lacs* to these subsidiary professions and in order to qualify themselves for these, they try to ape their principals. Their number has become so great now that it is no longer possible for all of them to maintain a life of idleness and show. Hence their miserable plight now. As the credit for maintaining, organizing and spreading the evil of exploitation goes to this class, it is also their responsibility to bring about the establishment of a classless society. You also belong to the middle class and in your capacity as *khadi* workers, you have to make a beginning in that direction. The Charkha Sangh was in fact established to prepare the country for this revolution.

It is clear that there are two ways for doing this: one is the violent method of the Communists and the other the non-violent method of Gandhiji. The Gandhian method is to turn the middle class into the producer-class. That is, the exploiter joins the producer-class by himself becoming a producer. This is a new type of revolution. The responsibility for achieving this rests on the middle class, and it is they who have to take intelligently the first deliberate step in this direction. If they do not act promptly in the direction of this class transformation, another violent revolution, viz. class warfare, will envelope the whole country, since the present terrible condition of inequitable class divisions will not long be tolerated.

(In the non-violent method), the first step in the direction of a classless society is for the middle class to join the producer-class, i.e. your life should be a productive activity. I do not mean that you should lower your standard of earning. In fact, there is little difference in the earnings of a *kisan*, a labourer and an ordinary middle class man; may be, that of a *kisan* is even a bit higher than yours. The middle classes have to maintain about five or six members in the family within an income ranging from Rs. 60 to 100, half of which is spent on outward show. But the members of a *kisan* family together earn much more and spend little on outward show. A *kisan* and his wife work throughout the day in the fields and on returning home, milk their buffalo and have a wholesome meal; but a clerk, on returning home after working the whole day singly, hankers after rice and pulse or bread and vegetable. If you want to change this situation, all the members of the family must make up their mind to work. I know some of you will say, who will look after the children and cook the food, if everybody in the house has to earn? But it should be realized that the majority of India's population is agricultural labourers who have also their children and their food to attend to. You might also point to other difficulties. But I can tell you out of my own experience that the difficulties are not of the body but of the mind. In order to give effect to my suggestion, I tried to arrange for the training of the wives of workers, and some workers did catch the revolutionary idea and sent their wives for training. But it is a matter for regret that they could not stick on, because they experienced difficulties. What were the difficulties? They had to change their old habits of food and drink; perhaps want of sufficient accommodation; also some heart-burning on account of not being habituated to living together.

If you want to run away in face of such difficulties, you may. But let me remind you that a violent strife is inevitable if we do not move with the trends of the times and achieve this revolution in India. It is not necessary for me to tell you what class warfare means. You read newspapers and the picture of communal strife is before you. When groups of men fight with one another, men become beasts. You know from the Punjab tragedies how a majority could suppress a minority. Murders, loot, incendiarism, attrocities on women, etc. became matters of ordinary occurrence. Do you think that the difficulties facing class transformation are greater than the hardships of a class war? You know that the population of *kisans* and labourers is greater than that of the middle class people. Do you think that in case a class war breaks out, your position would be better than that of the minorities of the East and the West Punjabs? These minorities could at least escape into Pakistan and India respectively, but where will the middle class people migrate to seek shelter? I wish to tell you plainly that at the time of a class war, the middle class people, meticulous in preserving the creases of their clothes, will find it difficult to preserve even their lives. If the present mentality does not go, those who want to protect their clothes from being soiled by mud might see them smeared with blood by inviting a violent strife tomorrow. Therefore it is not any abnegation that I talk of; I am simply drawing the attention of my friends to the writing on the wall, and I wish that they protect themselves well in time. It is no abnegation to leave a house that has caught fire.

The second step in solving the present problems of the country is joint community and family life of the workers. Today not only workers with families live separately but also those who are single. We talk of a Co-operative Commonwealth but though ourselves workers in that cause, we are unable to live together *inter se*. We advance all kinds of arguments. It is said that in a community kitchen much food is wasted and the cost per capita is greater. We should understand that capitalists and *kisans* advance the same pleas against nationalization of industries and co-operative farming. Therefore, if the arguments of our workers are good, then it is wrong to talk of nationalization and co-operative farming. But do you think that the

country can do without these? If not, we have to think with a clear conscience. If we cannot cook food for ten or twenty families in one kitchen, because it will be wasteful and costly, how can we talk of large industrial and other undertakings for a village or the country?

There are other reasons also for taking to community kitchens. If you want to enter the field of service with your families the maintenance of separate family kitchens will inflict injustice on our women. To become workers like *kisans* and *mazdoors* is not to adopt their wrong habits. The *kisan* and his wife work in the field throughout the day and when they return, the husband stretches himself on the bed, smoking his *huka* or *bidi*, while his wife has to do household duties and look after the children. Thus the burden on women is doubled. Even in middle class families, where women also work, the condition of women is the same. But you cannot do so. At the conference held after Gandhiji's death, this subject was much discussed and it was decided that there should be equality of status of men and women. Therefore if we want to do productive work along with our families, we must have common kitchens and common arrangements for looking after children. That is why a community kitchen is compulsory in *Nai Talim*, which is the way shown by Gandhiji for a communist society. If we do not take up this problem also simultaneously, in these days of freedom and class war, it is possible that a women's movement may also rise up demanding equality of status. I know that the opposition to my suggestion might come rather from women than men. In the beginning this is natural. But you have to go deep into this matter and understand that in this age, individualistic ideas are quickly giving place to socialistic ones and he who does not move with the times will be drowned in the currents.

As a member of a reformist organization, you must also give up habits of *pan* tobacco, tea, coffee, etc. Our main object is all-round village service. It means we go to the village to change their centuries-old customs and modes of life which are harmful to the individual as well as society. It is a matter for surprise that some workers argue that they cannot do without tea, or coffee, or spices in food, because it has become a habit with them. Some others show their readiness to leave those habits, but say that their wives may find it difficult to do so. To them I ask, how do they hope then to ask the villagers to leave their habits? To ask others to leave their habits while one pleads inability to leave them oneself is like one wishing to teach history without having read it himself. Students would not take education from such teachers but laugh at them on their face.

You have to think on these lines and decide to make the necessary changes in your life. I know our weakness is great; we are all weak men. Therefore my suggestion is, let every one think about them; share this letter with your family members, discuss with them, and take a decision according to your capacity. It is not necessary that every one should make a common resolve in every detail. But you should resolve to do a little more than you think you can easily do, and there should also be something in it which all the members of your centre can collectively adopt. For your guidance, I enclose herewith a copy of the Pledge * which the workers of Sevagram made on the 30th January last. It is not necessary that you should adopt the same, but it will serve you as a guide. If you take even a small deliberate step now and go ahead continuously, you will be able to achieve much.

I wish that you think over this during the Jayanti period (19th September to 2nd October) and decide on the last day what you resolve to do. Then from the 2nd October to 30th January, you will make all necessary preparations for it, and on the day of Gandhiji's last voyage, you can finally take a pledge.

I write this letter with great faith, and hope you will think over all the points. I might have written some plain words; I hope you will consider this letter as from a friend and overlook them.

(Translated from Hindustani)

* This is published elsewhere in this issue.

Correction

In the *Harijan* of September 11, 1949 (XIII-28) on page 226, column 2 in article "Desabhakta Konda Venkatappayya" in line 15 of paragraph 2 for 'Kondiah' please read 'Kotaiah'.

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HARIJAN

September 18 1949

THE MESSAGE OF KHADI

(*By Gandhiji*)

A Religious Discourse

The Chairman has asked me to give you a religious discourse. I do not know that I have ever given a religious discourse, or to put it the other way, I do not know a single speech of mine or a talk of mine, within my own recollection, which has not been a religious discourse. I think, if I am not deceived, that at the back of every word that I have uttered since I have known what public life is, and of every act that I have done, there has been a religious consciousness and a downright religious motive. My acts may have appeared to my audiences or to the readers of the word that I have written, political, economical and many other things. But I ask you to accept my word that the motive behind every one of them has been essentially and predominantly religious. And so is it to be this morning.

When I asked what I was expected to speak about, I was told that I was to speak what I liked. Well ,the message came to me this morning as I was on my way to this meeting, and I propose now to think before you aloud.

I had very precious moments with a missionary friend in Vellore. I had a heart to heart talk with the students of that place, and the next morning I was told something like this : " Your speech was very nice. You talked of the things of the spirit. But how is it that in the middle of the speech, like King Charles' head with the renowned Mr. Dick, *khadi* came up ? Can you explain what connection *khadi* can possibly have with spirituality ? " Then he went on, " You spoke about temperance ; that delighted us and it was certainly spiritual. You spoke about untouchability, a very fine subject for an audience spiritually inclined or for a spiritually inclined man to speak about. But both these came in your speech after your message of *khadi*. It seemed to jar on some of us." I have given you the substance of the conversation in my own words but faithfully. I gave the answer that came to me at the time, and this morning I want to amplify that answer.

Spinning — Supremely a Spiritual Message

......Throughout 35 years' unbroken experience of public service in several parts of the world, I have not yet understood that there is anything like spiritual or moral value apart from work and action. I have often repeated to audiences like this that great verse which has always remained with me ever since I read it : " Not every one that says unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven but he who doeth the will of my Father who is in Heaven." I have not reproduced that verse correctly, but you know what that verse is, and it is so true..

The moral I want to submit to you is that every act may be done, conceived and presented from a spiritual standpoint, or it may have none of it at all. I want to claim before you today that the message of the spinning wheel and *khadi* is supremely a spiritual message ; and it is because it is supremely a spiritual message for this land that it has got tremendous economic consequences as also political consequences.

Know Your India

India is suffering from menengitis, and if you will perform the necessary operation and make some return to those starving millions today, I say there is nothing but *khadi* for you. And if, as men spiritually inclined, you will think of those less fortunate than you are and who have not even enough to support themselves or clothe themselves, if you will have an indissoluble bond between them and yourselves, I say once more there is nothing for you but *khadi*. But it jars, and the reason why it jars is that this is a new thing and is a visionary thing, a day-dream as it appears to many. The missionary friend of Vellore, of whom I spoke just now, told me at the end of our conversation, " Yes, but can you stem the march of modern progress ? Can you put back the hands of the clock, and induce people to take to your *khadi* and make them work on a mere pittance ? " All I could say is that this friend did not know his India. From the Vellore meeting I went to two places, Arcot and Arni. I did not see much of the people there, I assure you, but saw the villagers less well clad than I am. I saw them not in their tens but in their tens of thousands.....................

............Talk to them of modern progress. Insult them by taking the name of God before them in vain. They will call you and me fiends if we talk about God to them. They know, if they know any God at all, a God of terror, vengeance, a pitiless tyrant. They do not know what love is. What can you do for them ? You will find it difficult to change these delightful sisters (pointing to the ladies present) from their silk saris to coarse *khadi* woven by those paralytic and crude hands. *Khadi* is rough ! It is too heavy ! Silk is soft to be touched and they can wear 9 yards of silk, but they cannot wear 9 yards of *khadi*. The poor sisters of Orissa have no saris ; they are in rags. Yet they have not lost all sense of decency, but I assure you, we have. We are naked in spite of our clothing, and they are clothed in spite of their nakedness. It is because of these that I wander about from place to place. I humour my people,..........

God's Work

But I cannot be satisfied, not till every man and woman in India is working at his or at her wheel. Burn that wheel if you find a better substitute. This is the one and only work which

can supply the needs of the millions without disturbing them from their homes. It is a mighty task and I know that I cannot do it. I know also that God can do it. The mightiest and the strongest matter is but a tiny affair for Him, when it pleases Him. He can destroy them all in the twinkling of an eye, as He has destroyed now thousands of homes in Gujarat and as He had destroyed thousands of homes a few years ago in South India. I carry this message of *khadi* and the spinning wheel with the fullest faith in God, and therefore in His creation, man. You may laugh at me today. You may call this a sordid thing. If you like, you may distrust me and say this is some political schemer who has come to place his *khadi* before us, but he has got many things up his sleeve. You may misinterpret me and my message. You may say: "We are too weak to do these things, and too poor." I know it is possible for you to repel me by your arguments and make me speechless. But I shall not lose faith in you so long as I cannot lose faith in God. It is impossible for me to lose that faith, and therefore I cannot lose faith in the message of *khadi* and the spinning wheel.

If I have not succeeded in opening out my heart to you, and if I have not succeeded in showing to you the rock-bottom spirituality of the message of *khadi*, I don't think I shall ever succeed in doing so. All I can say is I mean to succeed. My lips may not deliver the true message. God will do it all, in whose name I have delivered this message to you. God bless you.

(A speech at the Y. M. C. A., Madras)

Young India, 15-9-'27

QUESTION BOX

Compensation to Landlords

Q. I put some quotations to you from Louis Fischer's *A Week with Gandhi* for clarification:

Page 43 — Gandhiji: "The peasants would take the lands."
Fischer: "Would the landlords be compensated ?"
Gandhiji: "No. That would be fiscally impossible."

Page 73 — Fischer: "You feel then that it must be confiscated without compensation."
Gandhiji: "*Of Course*"

From the above, it appears that Gandhiji was against compensation to the landlords. Whereas the accepted policy of the Congress Committee and of the Congress Government is in favour of it. How could it be then reconciled and what is to be taken as justified ?

A. On looking into the book I find that the quotations are misleading when torn out of their context. In the first talk, Gandhiji explains his conception of the political and economic structure of India. It was of an entirely different type from that which is being forged in the Constituent Assembly. E.g. Gandhiji did not favour vesting too much power in the Centre, or even provinces. At page 44 of the book, Gandhiji is reported to have said as follows:

"There are seven hundred thousand villages in India. Each would be organized according to the will of its citizens, all of them voting. Then there would be seven hundred thousand votes and not four hundred million. Each village, in other words, would have one vote. The villages would elect their district administrations, and the district administrations would elect the provincial administrations, and these in turn would elect a president who would be the national chief executive."

I do not mention this to deprecate the Constituent Assembly. The Congress had never committed itself to the Gandhian view of the political and economic structure, and the Constituent Assembly and the governments representing the views of the Congress in the main are justified in acting in accordance with the principles which they always held.

The second question and answer occur in the course of the discussion on the "Quit India" programme. Gandhiji was asked to describe how he visualized the situation in case the British left India without handing over power to any organized body. Gandhiji explained:

"In the villages, the peasants will stop paying taxes. They will make salt despite official prohibition. This seems a small matter; the salt tax yields only a paltry sum to the British Government. But refusal to pay it will give the peasants the courage to think that they are capable of independent action. Their next step will be to seize the land."

This was all imagination, and it would not be proper to take an answer given against an imaginary background.

But apart from these two answers, Gandhiji did not, I believe, favour the acquisitorial method (with compensations) which is being followed. But even for that the Congress can not be blamed. Gandhiji wanted all property-holders of whatever type to be trustees of their possessions. They had to render service to their beneficiaries (cultivators, labourers and the people) and were to be entitled to only such personal remuneration as a manager could get. And we also know that his idea about personal remuneration was that it should be the same for every one ; i.e. the zamindar, the mill-owner, and the highest officer of State should get only such amount as could be allowed to a *bhangi* or a simple labourer. Since neither property-owners nor the people at large, nor even Gandhiji's workers, are prepared for such revolutionized life as yet, it would be unjust to criticize the Congress for acting as it does.

Whether the amount of compensation is excessive or low, and the way in which it should be paid are matters of detail and, of course, could be debated on merits by those who have studied the problems.

Wardha, 5-9-'49 K. G. MASHRUWALA

THE MESSAGE OF SARVODAYA

Wherever I go about in the country, I find people taking a great interest in the Sarvodaya Samaj. This idea has recently spread in the country and high hopes have been built around it. But it must be remembered that Sarvodaya is not going to drop from the sky; we have to bring it into existence by adopting it in our personal lives. Unless we adopt it in ourselves, it cannot come into existence in the world. Sarvodaya means rise or uplift of every one — the equalization of the backward, the poor and the weak with the advanced, the rich and the strong in society.

Neither the world nor the idea of Sarvodaya is a new one. सर्वेऽत्र सुखिनः सन्तु (May all here be happy); मा कश्चिद् दुःखमाप्नुयात् (May none be unhappy): this desire is breathed by every religion. But it has not come into practice. The present-day world situation is not conducive to it. But that does not mean that the spirit cannot spread into the world. In fact, the people are very unhappy at present and would like to see the way to the 'uplift of all'. But they are passing through such difficulties that they are unable to see it. They say that this is a machine age and we must produce goods on large scale so that all may have plenty. And attempts are made to produce on large scale, and yet many have to go hungry. Though our country is so large, yet it has to import its food. China also is an equally unhappy country with as big a population as India. In other parts of the world also the common people are not happy. There might be some who seem to enjoy life, but even they are not really happy and contented, since they are living an artificial life. Those who do not work with their hands have no appetite and due to indigestion they do not relish their food. They have no mental peace because they have become rich by exploiting others. I have come across many rich but unhappy persons who ask me to show the way to happiness. They say they have no appetite, no mental peace, and the society does not love them. They have done little service to the world and, therefore, the world shows little love for them. How can one, who does not possess health or mental peace and whom the world despises, feel happy at all? Rich people are thus unhappy. The poor labourers also are not happy because their daily necessities of life are not fulfilled. Thus the whole world is unhappy.

Compared to the olden days the amenities of life have now increased manyfold. I have just visited the Pasteur Institute here where several experiments are conducted to find out remedies for diseases. For this purpose they create diseases in animals and try remedies on them. These remedies, if successful, are made available to the public. But still nobody says that diseases have decreased in the world; on the other hand, every one admits that they have increased. If these poor animals, which are put to such sufferings, ask us whether we have become healthy in spite of inflicting such sufferings upon them, I am sure we have no answer to give. Why do we act so? We torture dumb creatures without any more health for ourselves. This all shows that we do not know how to lead life.

Our ancestors said that to be born a man was a very rare privilege. It was so considered because while other animals were supposed to live only for themselves, man possessed the sense to serve others also. Every animal knows hunger and feels happy only if it eats; but man can feel happy by giving food to others and himself going hungry. Birth in the animal kingdom is regarded as penance for past sins; that in the kingdom of gods for enjoying the fruits of our past good deeds. In both there is no scope for effort for further progress. Birth in human kingdom alone gives scope for that. In it there is neither paying for past sins nor merely enjoying fruits of past merits. It is for service. Hence to be born a man has been considered a rare privilege, which even gods aspire for. With that rare gift given to us, how can we be happy if we look to our selfish needs only and do not care for others? 'Sarvodaya' means that we should have regard for the good of all.

Here in Coonoor and Ooty, there are both the poor and the rich. The rich make a show of living in happiness. They do not care for the poor. If that goes on, neither the rich nor the poor will get real happiness. Therefore the *Gita* tells us: "Love and help one another. Through mutual service you will prosper." Human society can progress only by mutual aid. Those who are fortunate, intelligent, strong and rich, should consider it their duty to help others. God watches every one. He watches if a man of fortunes utilizes his wealth for the service of the poor; if he does not do so, he fails in God's test. Similarly, a poor man is also watched to see whether he becomes downcast on account of his poverty. If it is so, he too fails in God's test. Neither the poor should become downcast nor the rich arrogant.

We must remember that we are upon our test during this short life of ours, and so we must spend the few days we have here in service and in spreading and winning love. One might earn riches and acquire knowledge and power, but if one does not earn the love of others, one earns nothing in this world. Therefore love others and be loved by others; that is the message of 'Sarvodaya'.

VINOBA

(*Adapted from the post-prayer speech in Hindustani at Coonoor on* 25-5-'49)

CONTROLS RE - EXAMINED

III

Other Controls

We have a variety of controls like Cement, Steel, Paper, Import, Export, Exchange, etc. The question about these controls is: In whose interests are these controls maintained? 90 per cent or more of the people are not direct consumers of cement or steel, or paper. They are agriculturists and the quantity of cement required by them for building a well or some structure is very small compared to the total production of cement. Agricultural implements are made of steel and if Government wants to control these, they can do so. Or they can fix prices and keep the market free. Government's main argument for these controls is that these materials are in short supply, in view of their estimated consumption and that control is necessary to make these available at cheaper rates to the public. So far as steel is concerned, a study of prices shows that the difference between manufacturers' rates and the final retail selling price is generally 10 to 15 per cent. It may be pointed out that in pre-war times large consumers and retail dealers got their materials at manufacturers' rates. Even the prices given to the manufacturers are not retained by them, and a portion is given to the Price and Freight Equalization Fund of the Steel Control. It may further be noted that during the last one and a half years steel prices have been raised by Government by Rs. 125 on the plea of equalizing local prices with imported prices. You must have also recently read about the scandal of Iron and Steel permits in the Punjab and if other provinces' records are also looked up, they may reveal similar stories. I do not desire to dilate much on the subject, as the editor of the *Indian Finance* has written an article in its issue of June 4, 1949. It endorses what I said a year

back. According to me, even the export and import controls should be abolished completely or modified in such a way that there is minimum Government interference. I do not think there is any necessity for import controls from soft currency areas. The vacillating policy of the Import Control has resulted in a glut of consumer goods. Had there been free imports, people would not have rushed in to import as much as they could. The fear that luxury goods will be imported in large quantities is also unfounded, as the Open General Licence during the last six months has shown, according to Mr. Neogy himself, that such imports were only upto $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. To preserve exchange they need control only private remittances or private tours. If any of the imports are marring our industrial development, their cases can be examined by the Tariff Board and protective duties granted to such industries.

As for exports, they may hand over the whole export business to the respective trades by fixing quotas and removing licensing or permit system from official hands. The Associations may form exporting corporations and the quotas of each individual member can be fixed on the basis of their past or pre-war records. If there is any dispute among the members, the services of a judicial officer may be lent. There is only one thing to safeguard here and that is that exporters may prepare invoices of lower amounts to accumulate foreign exchange, so all these export bills may be scrutinized by ruling rates of prices.

Transport

I have not said anything about transport control, because if all the other controls are removed, transport will automatically find its own level. Too much is made about shortage of wagons, but we have instances on record where wagons are misused or are kept lying at marshalling yards or at private siding without any check or explanation by the higher authorities. The usual charge that the public is not co-operating with the Railway authorities is also wrong. I am reading every day advertisements about labelling, marking and packing, but if this is investigated at any despatching station, it will be found that packages are correctly labelled and securely packed. The Railways have a right to refuse insecurely packed articles at the despatching station. But what is actually happening is that parcels are either lying at the station, uncared for or tampered with on the way, their labels and markings removed and they are not delivered correctly at destinations. It also happens that parcels are received intact at the receiving stations but the delivery clerks are too careless to check up and deliver on presentation of Railway receipts. I have several instances where for days together delivery has been refused and after filing a claim parcels were located at stations by the Claims Officer. It really causes great annoyance to the public as materials are not received in time and believing these to be lost, they indent for new materials, only to be informed by the Claims Officer, after a year or so, that the parcels are lying at the station awaiting delivery. If there is proper check and supervision at junctions and marshalling yards, it will be found that wagons are lying or are not moved speedily. Money spent on advertisements inviting public co-operation, — MPL advertisements and allied series — is sheer waste of public money. The public are not to be blamed but Railway inefficiency is really to be blamed. The transport problem is really an administrative affair and if there is proper check and supervision, this shortage will disappear.

(To be continued)

DESABHAKTA KONDA VENKATAPPAYYA
II
(1919 to 1929)

In 1919 he was elected to the Madras Legislative Council and distinguished himself therein. But on the inauguration of the Non-co-operation Movement, he gave it up and threw himself heart and soul into the Non-violent Revolution under the inspiring lead of Pujya Bapu. He toured the whole of Andhra in the no-vote campaign and contributed to its splendid success in Andhra. It was said that his native district topped the list in the whole of Andhra if not in the whole of India. He opened on 1-12-1920 the first national school at Tenali. The Non-co-operation Movement was in full swing and Desabhaktaji had his full share in it. He was elected President of the N. C. O. Provincial Congress Committee, which was located at Guntur and he chose me as its Working Secretary. He had been known to Bapu before 1918. Mahatmaji knew the sterling qualities of the Desabhakta and took him into his Working Committee of which he continued to be a respected member for several years. Lasting friendship and affection grew up between them and continued till their deaths.

In December 1921, the President and the Secretary toured the Guntur District and prepared it for the no-tax campaign pending the final decision of the Congress at Ahmedabad. There Venkatappayyaji obtained Bapuji's permission to start the campaign, of course on fulfilment of the conditions prescribed by him. On 5-1-'22 the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee gave discretion to the District to withhold taxes and the Desabhakta authorized the Guntur District Congress Committee to start it on 12-1-'22. The Pedanandipadu firka was selected for the intensive fight and it was mentioned in Bapu's ultimatum to Lord Reading. The no-tax campaign caused a tremendous upheaval. Old and young became volunteers and revolution started abroad. 63 lacs out of the total revenue demand of 65 lacs were withheld in the district.

Meanwhile the Chaurichaura incidents cropped up. Bapu suspended the movement. He was arrested. Venkatappayya was also arrested.

on this side. The alien Government launched a campaign of terrible repression.

Even in 1921 there was the Chira Municipal Satyagraha led by the redoubtable Andhraratna Gopalakrishniah and the Palnad Forest Satyagraha led by Vakil Narasimhachary and Barrister Laxminarayana. Consequent on their arrest, a week's hartal was declared at Guntur which again led to the arrest of Desabhaktaji and other leading Congressmen including the Secretary of the District Congress Committee. Needless to add that Venkatappayyaji was always ready for the supreme sacrifice. In the end he was acquitted.

As he was imprisoned for one year in 1922, he could not attend the Gaya Session but after the resignation of Sri Chittaranjan Das in 1923, he was elected President of the A. I. C. C. with the Andhraratna as Working Secretary. At the end of that year the Congress was held at Coconada and naturally he was the Chairman of the Reception Committee and he delivered his welcome address in Hindi.

Thereafter the political pace slackened a little. As a no-changer he took to constructive work. The Andhra Khaddar Bank was formed in 1923 and at his instance, it was transferred from Masulipatam to Guntur. In 1926 the A. I. S. A. Andhra branch was formed with Venkatappayyaji as agent. I had to act as the Secretary of both the Khaddar Bank and the Andhra Branch till my resignation of the latter on 1-10-1928. In 1929 it was removed to Masulipatam with Dr. Pattabhi as Honorary Secretary. During Mahatmaji's *khadi* tour in Andhra, Kondaji exerted himself to the utmost and a sum of about three lakhs was collected in Andhra, his district topping the lists. During the negotiations that took place regarding the transfer of Andhra branch, Mahatmaji remarked "Where Venkatappayya is, of course, Sitaramsastry is there," showing how he correctly appreciated our relations *inter se*. In spite of the transfer of the Andhra branch, he continued to take keen interest in *khadi* and during the truce period in 1931, the Guntur District Khaddar Association was formed and Mahatmaji some time later offered to hand over to him the Guntur District free from the control of the Andhra Branch for intensive *khadi* work. It was in connection with the certification of this institution, that he attended a meeting of the A. I. S. A. at Sabarmati and there for the first time he took food cooked by Harijans. When in the evening after prayers, he was asked to address the gathering, he referred to it as a fortunate day in his life as he then completely fulfilled Bapuji's injunctions in the matter. He successfully overcame his early hesitation. Though he had no scruples about *pankti-bheda* (observing caste in food) and *dristi-dosha* (regarding food seen by a man of inferior caste as unhallowed), even in the Vinayasram, he was not prepared to eat food cooked by the Harijans.

G. SITARAMSASTRY

(*To be continued*)

SEVAGRAM KHADI WORKERS' PLEDGE

Today we are in the midst of Gandhiji's Anniversary when, if not in body, he is present among us in spirit. Bapu lived for us and died for us and therefore on this day we give our best thoughts to our self-purification, life-purpose and social service.

The primary object of our organization is *khadi* propaganda. For some years we have been trying here to increase to the utmost efficiency and speed in spinning and accessory processes, to discover cheap and simple implements, to prepare literature on the technique of spinning and to spread knowledge about it and to teach it to others. There is yet much ground to be covered in this direction and we the workers and students of the Charkha Sangh, Sevagram, resolve today to devote, individually and collectively, our best mental and physical abilities to this task during this year.

But along with this resolve to apply ourselves singlemindedly, with devotion and determination to these tasks, we cannot forget that the ultimate object of the spinning wheel is to achieve freedom from exploiters and exploitation. For this purpose we have to aim at self-sufficiency in our lives, and the *charkha* is the first and the most important step in this direction, being universally adoptable. We realize that the *charkha* cannot exist without a life based on non-exploitation and individual as well as co-operative self-sufficiency. We cannot forget the other factors concerning this kind of life. In fact, these other factors serve as nourishment and guidance so necessary for spreading the spinning activity and attaining the ultimate objective. We, therefore, also resolve today to try our best collectively to remove the imperfections that exist in us and in our organization. As a beginning in this direction, we will not use mill-flour in our organization but will either grind it ourselves or, if that is not possible, get it ground by others for wages on *chakkis*. Similarly, we will not use mill-oil but only *ghani* oil. Though the habit of drinking tea, coffee, cocoa, etc. is confined to a very few here, it is hoped even these few will leave this habit and consider such drinks as prohibited food. It will only be used as a medicine under helpless conditions. We will not engage domestic servants except when required in case of sickness and even in that case, we shall, as far as possible, try to help one another and thus dispense with the necessity of servants. We will also take full care to keep our premises and surroundings clean.

We realize that our weaknesses are ultimately of the mind and in order to remove them and to strengthen and purify the mind and to achieve social progress, we will take part in prayers both in the morning and evening.

We pray for *Pujya* Bapu's blessings in our resolve and for his help in fulfilling it.

Sevagram, 30-1-'49

(*Translated from Hindustani*)

BAPU'S LETTERS TO MIRA
[1924-1948]

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